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SHOCK SUSPENSTORIES

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THE COMIC YOU HOLD IN YOUR HANDS IS PART OF THE CHRONOLOGICAL, FACSIMILE REPRINTING OF THE **FAMOUS (AND INFAMOUS!) EC COMICS** LINE OF THE EARLY 1950s! WE STARTED WITH THE **FIRST ISSUE** OF EACH TITLE AND ARE ON OUR WAY TO THE **BITTER END!** GET ON THE BANDWAGON, AND **FILL IN THE GAPS** IN YOUR COLLECTION FROM THIS BACKLIST!



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CRYPT #2



CRYPT #3



CRYPT #4



CRYPT #5



CRYPT #6



W SCI #1



W SCI #2



W SCI #3



W SCI #4



W SCI #5



W SCI #6



SHOCK #1



SHOCK #2



SHOCK #3



SHOCK #4



SHOCK #5



SHOCK #6

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The SACRIFICE

I HAVE JUST WRITTEN, SIGNED AND MAILED TO THE POLICE A CAREFULLY WORDED STATEMENT, CONFESSING TO THE MURDER OF JONATHAN FIELDING... COMPLETELY ABSOLVING HIS WIDOW, GLORIA FIELDING, OF ANY COMPLICITY IN THE HORRENDOUS DEED AND CLEARING HER NAME OF ALL GUILT. I HAVE DONE THIS OUT OF THE DEEP LOVE AND COMPASSION I HAVE FOR THIS WOMAN. I CANNOT BEAR TO SEE HER SUFFER ANOTHER NIGHT OF DEGRADATION AND HUMILITY SUCH AS SHE IS NOW ENDURING AT THIS VERY MOMENT. IN AN HOUR OR SO, GLORIA WILL BE COMING IN THE DOOR... RED-EYED AND SOBBING. AND IT WILL BE THE LAST TIME FOR HER. NOW, I STAND BEFORE THE HUGE FRENCH DOORS LEADING OUT ONTO HER PENTHOUSE BALCONY. IN THE EAST, THE NIGHT SKY IS JUST BEGINNING TO RETREAT FROM THE ADVANCING DAWN. I LIFT THE VIAL OF POISON TO MY LIPS, AND I DRINK IT DOWN...



FOR YOU... MY DARLING...

**A CRIME
SUSPENSE STORY**

THERE IS A *BURNING* WITHIN ME... A *LIQUID FIRE* CARRYING WITH IT *THE TOUCH OF DEATH*. IN A FEW MINUTES I WILL *FEEL* THAT TOUCH, AND I WILL *DIE* AND GLORIA WILL *FINALLY BE FREE*. I TURN AND WALK SLOWLY TO A CHAIR, SINKING DOWN INTO ITS LUXURIOUS SOFTNESS. THE MUSIC FROM THE PHONOGRAPH DRIFTS ACROSS THE PENTHOUSE LIVING-ROOM. MUSIC... SWEET MUSIC. LIKE THE GLORIOUS MUSIC I HEARD IN MY HEART THE DAY I FIRST MET HER... GLORIA... THE WOMAN I LOVE...

JONATHAN: COME IN, GLORIA. A PLEASURE, MRS. FIELDING.
I... OH, I'M SORRY! I WANT YOU TO MEET JAMES REED, MR. REED... MY WIFE, GLORIA...
I DON'T KNOW YOU HAD COMPANY.



GLORIA FIELDING WAS THE MOST BEAUTIFUL WOMAN I HAD EVER SEEN. I THINK I FELL IN LOVE WITH HER THE MOMENT I MET HER. AND SHE *KNEW* IT. SOMETHING DOWN DEEP INSIDE HER SEEMED TO STIR, TOO...

MR. REED IS AN INSURANCE SALESMAN, MY DEAR. HE'S TRYING TO INTEREST ME IN A POLICY...
MR. REED LOOKS VERY CAPABLE OF INTERESTING PEOPLE IN... IN INSURANCE POLICIES, JONATHAN.
YOU FLATTER ME, MRS. FIELDING.



THE ATTRACTION BETWEEN GLORIA AND ME WAS LIKE A SNOWBALL ROLLING DOWNHILL, GATHERING MOMENTUM AND SIZE AS ITS SPEED INCREASED...

WELL, THANK YOU, MR. REED, LEAVE ME YOUR CARD AND I'LL CALL YOU...

YES, MR. REED, HERE YOU ARE...

OF COURSE...



I'LL NEVER FORGET THE LOOK THAT GLORIA GAVE ME AS SHE SAW ME TO THE DOOR OF HER SPACIOUS SHOW-PLACE HOME. IT WAS A LOOK OF HUNGER AND LONELINESS AND DESPERATION AND A THOUSAND YET-UNSAID WORDS...

WELL... GOOD-NIGHT, MRS. FIELDING. I... I TRUST I'LL BE HEARING FROM YOU...

I'M SURE OF IT, MR. REED. I THINK YOUR... ER... POLICY... IS JUST WHAT IS... NEEDED!



THAT'S ALL THERE WAS TO IT. A GLANCE... A SMILE... A FEW INNOCENT PHRASES... AND SUDDENLY THE INFERNO IN OUR HEARTS WERE ROARING WITH THE FLAMES OF DESIRE. I WASN'T SURPRISED AT ALL WHEN SHE CALLED THE NEXT DAY...

MRS. FIELDING! I'VE GOT TO SEE YOU CAN YOU GET AWAY FOR AN HOUR? IT'S IMPORTANT! MY... MY HUSBAND WON'T BE HERE...



I SHALL NEVER FORGET THAT FIRST SECRET MEETING... THE UNCOMFORTABLE FORCED CONVERSATION SCALING THE WALL OF MUTUAL EMBARRASSMENT THAT STOOD BETWEEN US... THE SILENCE WHILE OUR HUNGRY THOUGHTS WHIRLED WITHIN US, TRYING TO SEEK EXPRESSION... AND THEN THE SUDDEN SURGE OF PASSION... THE BREAK-THROUGH...

DARLING... DARLING... FROM THE VERY FIRST MOMENT I SAW YOU...

DON'T SPEAK, JUST HOLD ME... KISS ME...



OURS WAS A LOVE THAT HAD SPRUNG SUDDENLY... AN EXPLOSION OF EMOTION... A PASSIONATE SWEEPING OF BODY AND MORALS. WE MET, WE LOVED... IT WAS SIMPLE IN ITS VIOLENCE, AND IT WAS IMPOSSIBLE...

HE'D NEVER GIVE ME UP. HE'D HOLD ON TO ME... FOREVER. BUT... YOU COULD... HAVE ME AND HIS FORTUNE...

GLORIA. I... I... HUH? YOU... YOU MEAN...



IT WAS A BLINDING LOVE. IT HAD NO ROOM FOR SOBER THINKING, IT WAS A CRASHING SYMPHONY AND I PLAYED BLINDLY ALONG...

IT WOULD BE SO SIMPLE, DARLING. THE BALCONY OUT THERE. ONE PUSH... AND...

BUT THAT'S MURDER, DEAREST. I... I...



YES, I PLAYED ALONG, THE TUNE WAS DESIRE. THE THEME WAS PASSION. THE INSTRUMENT... WAS DEATH...

MY WIFE FINALLY CONVINCED ME TO TAKE OUT THAT POLICY, MR. REED. NOW, ABOUT THE PREMIUMS...

GENTLEMEN. DON'T YOU THINK IT WOULD BE MUCH COOLER ON THE BALCONY...?



THE PIECE HAD BEEN WELL-REHEARSED. WE KNEW EVERY NOTE, EVERY BAR, EVERY MEASURE. THE STAGE WAS SET. THIS MAD MUSIC WAS ABOUT TO BEGIN...

YES. WELL, AS I WAS SAYING, REED. I'D PREFER THE PREMIUMS TO BE LUMPED INTO ONE YEARLY SUM... SO...

JONATHAN! COME QUICKLY! LOOK...



MY HEART WAS A THUMPING KETTLE-DRUM. GLORIA'S VOICE WAS A CLASHING CYMBAL. JONATHAN HURRIED TO THE EDGE OF THE PARAPET AND GAZED DOWN INTO THE CITY CANYON BELOW... DOWN TO WHERE GLORIA POINTED...

WHAT IS IT, DEAR? WHAT DO YOU SEE?

NOW, DARLING! NOW...



THE MELDOW, JONATHAN'S SHRIEK, FADED AWAY... FADED DOWN INTO THE CANYON... DOWN EIGHTEEN FLOORS TO A DEATH-FINALE...

THE CONCERT WAS OVER. JONATHAN LIVED NO MORE. GLORIA WAS FREE... AND SHE WAS NINE. SHE FELL INTO MY ARMS...

OH, JAMES! HIS SCREAM! IT... IT WAS AWFUL! AWFUL!

IT'S ALL OVER, NOW, GLORIA. G'MON! LET'S GO DOWN...



THE AMBULANCE-SIREN WAS AN ENCORE THAT SUNG INTO THE CANYON. THE INTERNE LOOKED AT JONATHAN'S BROKEN AND TWISTED BODY AND SHOOK HIS HEAD...

YOU DON'T NEED ME! YOU NEED A MORGUE-WAGON!

SOB... SOB...



THE POLICE CAME AND QUESTIONED US...

I... I'M JUST AN INSURANCE SALESMAN. I CAME UP HERE TO SELL MR. FIELDS A POLICY. WE WERE OUT ON THE BALCONY. HE... HE SLIPPED...

SOB. SOB... IT... IT WAS AN ACCIDENT! A HORRIBLE, HORRIBLE ACCIDENT!

THE POLICE HAD NO REASON TO BELIEVE OTHERWISE. THERE WAS NO MOTIVE. GLORIA AND JONATHAN HAD BEEN HAPPILY MARRIED. I WAS A STRANGER. THERE WAS NO EVIDENCE OF FOUL PLAY. AND MY PARTING SHOT FIXED THINGS GOOD...

I'M SORRY MRS. FIELDS. YOUR HUSBAND DIDN'T SIGN THE PAPERS. HE... HE WASN'T EVEN COVERED...

GET OUT, REED! CAN'T YOU SEE SHE'S UPSET ENOUGH ABOUT THIS?!



IT WAS OVER... DONE WITH. THE POLICE MADE THEIR REPORT... THE CORONER'S JURY DELIBERATED... AND THE REPORT WAS DELIVERED...

... ACCIDENTAL DEATH!
THIS CASE IS CLOSED.

AND THEN IT HAPPENED. WE WERE IN THE PENTHOUSE THAT NIGHT, CELEBRATING. THE PHONE RANG...

LET IT RING,
BABY

I'D BETTER ANSWER IT,
DEAR. IT MAY BE IMPORTANT.

I WATCHED GLORIA CROSS THE ROOM TO THE PHONE... BEAUTIFUL, DESIRABLE GLORIA... A WOMAN A MAN WOULD MURDER FOR. I WATCHED HER LIFT THE RECEIVER, WATCHED HER SOFT KISSABLE LIPS MOUTH THE WORDS, WATCHED HER FACE GROW PALE...

OH...NO? OH...
GOD, NO?

WHAT IS IT,
GLORIA?

SHE HUNG UP, SHAKING. SHE TURNED TO ME, FEAR WRITTEN IN WHITE ON HER LOVELY FACE...

IT...IT WAS A MAN, JIMMY!
HE...HE WANTS TO SEE US!
HE'S COMING UP. HE SAID...
HE SAID IT'S ABOUT MY
HUSBAND'S MURDER!

MURDER?!
GOOD LORD!

OUR PASSION-CONCERTO HAD HAD AN AUDIENCE. HE ARRIVED A FEW MINUTES LATER...TALL, DARK, SUAVE-LOOKING. HE STOOD IN THE CENTER OF THE LIVING-ROOM, GRINNING...

ALLOW ME TO INTRODUCE MYSELF. MY NAME IS PAUL NICHOLS. I LIVE OUT THERE...ON THE TWENTIETH FLOOR OF THE BUILDING OPPOSITE THIS ONE!

HIS MOUTH WAS A GRIM LINE...HARD AND CRUEL. HIS EYES WERE GLUED ON GLORIA AS HE SPOKE, TRAVELING OVER HER, ABSORBING...

I HAVE OFTEN WATCHED MRS. FIELDING FROM MY WINDOW... WATCHED HER WITH A GREAT DEAL OF ADMIRATION. I HAPPENED TO BE LOOKING THE NIGHT MR. FIELDING...ER...SHALL WE SAY...DIED?!

HE WENT ON...

I SAW IT ALL... EVERYTHING!
I SAW YOU LURE HIM TO THE EDGE... I SAW YOU PUSH HIM. I KNOW IT'S MURDER! I SAW IT ALL.

WHY...
YOU...



HE HELD UP HIS HAND...

DON'T TRY ANYTHING! IT WOULDN'T BE WISE! I HAVE WRITTEN DOWN WHAT I KNOW, AND MY SEALED STATEMENT IS NOW IN THE HANDS OF MY LAWYER, TO BE OPENED IN THE EVENT OF MY UNTIMELY DEATH...

THEN... THEN THIS IS BLACK MAIL!

CALL IT WHAT YOU WILL! IF MY ATTRACTION TO MRS. FIELDING HAD NOT BEEN SO... SO COMPELLING, I MIGHT NEVER HAVE SEEN, BUT I HAVE... AND I AM READY TO DO BUSINESS.

HOW... HOW MUCH DO YOU WANT?

HE LAUGHED. HIS EYES NEVER LEFT GLORIA...

I AM A RICH MAN, MR. REED. I DON'T WANT MONEY!

THEN... THEN WHAT DO YOU WANT?

I WANT MRS. FIELDING!

GASP... WHAT? NEVER!

HE GRINNED... EVILY... LECHEROUSLY...

LET'S GIVE THIS MATTER SOME SERIOUS THOUGHT MR. REED... MRS. FIELDING. LET'S NOT ACT HASTILY...

YOU'RE OUT OF YOUR MIND!

IF THE POLICE WERE TO FIND OUT WHAT I KNOW, BOTH YOU AND MRS. FIELDING WOULD DIE IN THE ELECTRIC CHAIR. YOU WOULDN'T WANT MRS. FIELDING TO DIE, WOULD YOU, MR. REED? YOU LOVE HER TOO MUCH FOR THAT. AND YOU, MRS. FIELDING, DO YOU WANT YOUR LOVER TO...

I'LL KILL YOU, NICHOLS, SO HELP ME!

WAIT, JIMMY! WAIT!

GLORIA LOOKED UP AT ME WITH TEAR-FILLED EYES...

I LOVE YOU, JIMMY! I DON'T WANT YOU TO DIE. I'D DO ANYTHING TO PREVENT IT. I LOVE YOU!

NOT THAT! I COULDN'T EXPECT YOU TO AGREE TO THAT!

PAUL NICHOLS SNEERED...

THEN I TELL
WHAT I KNOW!
IS THAT YOUR
DECISION?

NO. WAIT. LISTEN
TO ME, DARLING.
IT'LL ONLY BE FOR A
LITTLE WHILE. HE'LL
GROW TIRED OF ME. WE'LL
STILL HAVE OUR WHOLE
LIVES TOGETHER.

GLORIA...
SWEET... I...
SOB... I...
WON'T...
SOB...
LET YOU!



I COULDN'T HELP IT. I CRIED LIKE A BABY. GLORIA,
MY GLORIA. SHE WAS WILLING TO DEGRADE HERSELF
TO SAVE ME... GIVE HERSELF TO THIS FIEND...

ALL RIGHT, MR. NICHOLS.
WHAT ARE YOUR TERMS?

DURING THE DAY, I
AM AT THE OFFICE.
YOUR TIME IS
YOUR OWN. I AM
HOME AT EIGHT.
I EXPECT YOU TO
BE THERE... EVERY
NIGHT... WAITING...

NO!
OH,
GOD!
NO!



GLORIA HELD ME AS A MOTHER HOLDS A HURT SON...
PROTECTING... SOOTHING... RUNNING HER SOFT HANDS
OVER MY FACE, MY HAIR... HUSHING ME... LISTENING TO
HIS TERMS...

GO ON, MR.
NICHOLS.

THERE IS *NOTHING* TO GO ON ABOUT.
TOMORROW YOU WILL MARRY ME! AND NOW,
SINCE WE'RE ENGAGED, YOU MIGHT AS
WELL KNOW MY FIRST NAME. IT
IS PAUL.



I TOLD HIM... I TOLD HIM WHAT HIS NAME WAS.
EVERY VILE WORD I EVER KNEW, EVERY NAME
I'D EVER LEARNED, I CALLED HIM. HE SMILED AND
LEFT. GLORIA SIGNED...

LET ME KILL HIM, GLORIA!
LET ME...

THE STATEMENT,
DEAREST. REMEMBER
THE STATEMENT. HE
HAS US...



I REMEMBER THAT NEXTNIGHT. I
THOUGHT IT WOULD NEVER END.
THE WAITING. THE INTERMINABLE
WAITING. I PACED THE PENTHOUSE
FLOORS... SMOKED CIGARETTE
AFTER CIGARETTE... CURSED HIM...
AND CRIED FOR GLORIA...

AND TOWARDS DAWN, WITH SLEEP-
LESS EYES, I BEHELD MY LOVED
ONE AS SHE CAME IN...

GLORIA...
BABY...

OH, JIMMY... SOB...
JIMMY! I FEEL
SO... SO
FILTHY!

CHOKED...



SHE CRIED IN MY ARMS. SHE SHOOK
AS THOUGH SHE WERE COLD EVEN
THOUGH THE NIGHT WAS STIFLING.
AND I TRIED TO COMFORT HER...

DON'T GO BACK,
GLORIA. LET'S
RUN AWAY.
LET'S...

HE'LL TELL...
SOB... TELL...
THE POLICE.
THEY'LL FIND
US. NO! I
MUST GO ON
WITH THIS...



CAN YOU UNDERSTAND THE HORROR I'VE GONE THROUGH? CAN YOU UNDERSTAND THE PAIN... SEEING GLORIA RETURN EACH NIGHT... DEGRADED... HATING HERSELF... AND YET LOVING ME ENOUGH TO GO BACK AGAIN THE NEXT NIGHT.



HOW... HOW WAS IT TONIGHT, DARLING.

DON'T... JIMMY! DON'T ASK ME!

IT WAS AN ORGEEAL FOR HER, AN ORGEEAL THAT SAAPEOHER BOTH PHYSICALLY AND MENTALLY...



I'M ... SO TIRED, TODAY, JIMMY! PLEASE ...

I'M ... SORRY, HONEY.

AND IN THE MONTHS THAT FOLLOWED I WATCHED GLORIA GROW HARD AND NUMB AND COLD TO MY AFFECTIONS. AND EACH NIGHT, I WAITED FOR HER.



AND EACH MORNING SHE RETURNED. RED-EYED, BRCKEN, PLEADING...

I CAN'T GO ON, JIMMY! I CAN'T. HE'S KILLING EVERYTHING. EVERYTHING. EVEN MY NEED FOR YOU...

NO! OH, GLORIA... GLORIA...



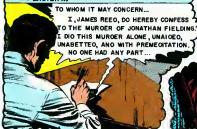
THIS MORNING, WHEN SHE LOOKED AT ME AND CRIED...

OH, SAVE ME, DARLING. SAVE ME...



... I KNEW WHAT I HAD TO DO ...

SO I CONFESSED TO THE CRIME. I WROTE IT ALL DOWN. I HAD TO DO IT THIS WAY. I WAS AFRAID TO GO TO THE POLICE. I DON'T THINK I COULD KEEP GLORIA'S NAME OUT OF IT AT THE TRIAL. WRITING IT WAS EASIER...



TO WHOM IT MAY CONCERN...

I, JAMES REED, DO HEREBY CONFESS TO THE MURDER OF JONATHAN FIELDING. I DO THIS MURDER ALONE, UNAIDED, UNABETTED, AND WITH PREMEDITATION. NO ONE HAD ANY PART ...

I CLEARED GLORIA COMPLETELY. I GAVE THEM A GOOD REASON. I TOLD THEM HE' INSULTED ME AND THAT WHEN MRS. FIELDING HAD GONE INTO THE LIVING-ROOM FOR CIGARETTES, I'O HURLED HIM OFF THE BALCONY...



... AND IN REMORSE FOR THIS, I HAVE RETURNED TO THE SCENE OF MY CRIME AND WILL COMMIT SUICIDE BY TAKING A DEADLY POISON. GOODBYE. JAMES A. REED.

AND NOW I AM LYING HERE, WATCHING THE DAWN COME UP IN THE EAST, AND KNOWING THAT AT LAST, GLORIA WILL BE FREE. THE POISON WITHIN ME BURNS AND MY MOUTH IS DRY AND THERE IS A DARKENING...

JIMMY... I'M... HOME!

G-GLORIA!



I CANNOT MOVE. MY BODY IS NUMB. I CALL HER NAME...

GLORIA...

JIMMY! JIMMY!
WHAT HAVE YOU DONE!?



SHE RUSHES TO ME, SOBBING...

JIMMY...

I... TOOK... POISON... CONFESSED...
MURDER... YOU'RE... FREE...



IT'S FUNNY. A LITTLE WHILE AGO, THE APARTMENT WAS GETTING LIGHT. THE RISING SUN WAS STREAMING THROUGH THE WINDOWS. NOW, IT IS GETTING DARK ONCE MORE. I'M DYING. I KNOW IT. THERE'S NOT MUCH TIME...

POISON!? CONFESSION!?

SAVED... YOU! MAILED
CONFESSION TO POLICE.
HE... HAS... NO... HOLD...
ON... YOU... NOW...



IT'S STRANGE TO DIE. I SEEM TO HEAR LAUGHTER... GIRLISH LAUGHTER... GLORIA'S GIRLISH LAUGHTER...

WELL, IT'S ABOUT
TIME...

YOU...
CAN...
DIVORCE...
HIM...



AND NOW I SEEM TO HEAR HER VOICE... SNARLING AT ME... SNEERING...

IT'S ABOUT TIME,
SUCKER. I WAS
BEGINNING TO
THINK I'D SIZED
YOU UP WRONG!

HUH...
HUH...



ALL IS DARKNESS NOW. THE LAST THING I HEAR IS A PHONE DIAL'S CLICKING... AND GLORIA SAYS,

PAUL, DARLING! HE'S FINALLY DONE IT. HE'S TAKEN POISON AND MAILED A CONFESSION TO THE POLICE, ABSOLVING ME. YES, DEAR, I TOLD YOU IT WOULD WORK! I TOLD YOU I COULD FIND SOME SUCKER TO MURDER JONATHAN FOR US. YOU CAN PACK YOUR THINGS AND MOVE UPTOWN NOW... HERE... WITH ME!



THE
END

...so shall ye reap!

THE MAN AND THE WOMAN SAT IN THE LIVING-ROOM OF THEIR MODEST FRAME HOUSE AND LISTENED TO THE OMNIBUS TICKING OF THE MANTEL CLOCK AS ITS HANDS MOVED SLOWLY AROUND ITS FACE TOWARD ELEVEN. THEY SAT WITH BOWED HEADS AND BENT SHOULDERS AND CRIED-OUT EYES. THEY WERE IN THEIR FORTIES. THEY WERE WILMA AND MURRAY VORHEES... MOTHER AND FATHER. THEY WERE WAITING...

WHAT DID WE EVER DO, MURRAY?
WHAT DID WE EVER DO TO
DESERVE THIS? HOW
COULD HE DO THIS
TO US?

WE WERE GOOD
TO HIM, WILMA. ALL
OF OUR LIVES WE DID
RIGHT BY HIM. IT ISN'T
OUR FAULT. WE TRIED!



THE BOY SAT ALONE BENEATH THE GLARE OF THE OVERHEAD LAMP AND LISTENED TO THE OMNIBUS TICKING OF THE WALL CLOCK AS ITS HANDS MOVED SLOWLY AROUND ITS FACE TOWARD ELEVEN. HE SAT WITH BOWED HEAD AND BENT SHOULDERS AND CRIED-OUT EYES. HE WAS TWENTY. HE WAS KENNETH VORHEES... SON. HE WAS WAITING...

HOW DID IT HAPPEN? WHY DID I TURN OUT
LIKE THIS? WHAT MADE ME LIKE THIS?
WHO'S TO BLAME?



THE MOTHER SHOOK HER HEAD SADLY...

WHEN HE WAS A *BABY* HE WAS *PALE...THIN...SICKLY*. I *WORRIED* ABOUT HIM...*TODD* CARE OF HIM...MADE HIM *STRONG*. I USED TO FEED HIM *GOOD FOODS...WHOLE SOME FOODS*. HE'D TURN UP HIS *FUNNY LITTLE NOSE...SDB...BUT HE'D FINISH THEM!*



THE SON SHOOK HIS HEAD SADLY...

EVEN WHEN I WAS A *KID* THEY *MADE* ME DO THINGS I *DIDN'T WANT* TO DO. I REMEMBER MY MOTHER *FORCING* FOODS THAT I *DESPISED* DOWN MY *THROAT*. FOODS THAT *NAUSEATED* ME. I REMEMBER, AFTERWARD, *RUNNING OUT INTO THE BACK YARD...THE BATHROOM...AND THROWING UP!*



"YOU WERE A *GOOD* MOTHER TO HIM, WILMA. *DON'T* EVER THINK DIFFERENT. AND I WAS A *GOOD FATHER*. WHY *DIDN'T* I *PLAY* WITH HIM WHENEVER I *COULD*? WASN'T I JUST LIKE A *BIG BROTHER* TO HIM?"

LISTEN, KENNY! WHEN I GET *THROUSN* WITH YOU, YOU'LL BE THE *BEST* FIRST SACKER IN *TOWN*. *NOW WATCH*, AND TRY TO GET IT *RIGHT*. FIRST...

YES, DADDY!



'WEREN'T WE CAREFUL ABOUT WHAT MOVIES HE SAW, THE BOOKS HE READ? REMEMBER THE DAY WE FOUND HIM READING THAT *CHEAP LURID COMIC BOOK*? WEREN'T WE ALWAYS LOOKING OUT FOR HIS OWN *SODD*?'

WHAT DO YOU MEAN IT'S A '*COMIC*' BOOK? '*COMIC*' HAN! IT'S NOTHING BUT *MURDER AND VIOLENCE*. I *FORBID* YOU TO *READ* THIS *TRASN*, UNDERSTAND? UNDERSTAND? THE NEXT TIME I CATCH YOU...

YES, MOMMY...



'MOM THOUGHT SHE WAS DOING RIGHT. AND DAD...DAD WAS A FATHER AT HIS OWN CONVENIENCE. HE'D PLAY WITH ME *RARELY*! ONLY WHEN HE WANTED TO...NOT WHEN I *WANTED* IT OR *NEEDED* IT..'

PLEASE, DADDY! THERE'S A *GAME* TOMORROW. IF I *COU*N'T MAKE OUT *GOOD* THEY'LL *KICK* ME *OFF* THE *TEAM*! *OMON*...

GO AWAY, KENNY! I'M *TIRED*! LEAVE ME *ALONE*! STOP *ANNDYING* ME!



'THINGS THAT WERE WRONG FOR ME WERE PERFECTLY OKAY FOR MY *FOLKS*. I REMEMBER THE DAY THEY FOUND ME READING A *HARMLESS COMIC*. THEY *LECTURED* AND *SHOUTED* AND *SCREAMED*. BUT, THAT EVENING, AT *DINNER*..'

LISTEN TO *THIS*, WILMA. LAST NIGHT, TWO UNIDENTIFIED MEN BROKE INTO THE HOME OF MR. AND MRS. *SO-AND-SO* AND WHILE ONE OF THEM HELD THE HUSBAND PRISONER IN THE BATHROOM, THE OTHER...YOU KNOW...THE WIFE. THEN THEY KILLED HER AND *FATALLY WOUNDED*...

HERE! LET ME SEE THAT!





'DIDN'T WE TRY TO SHOW HIM THE DIFFERENCE BETWEEN **RIGHT** AND **WRONG**? REMEMBER THE DAY HE SWIPED THE NEIGHBOR'S KID'S **TOY**? HOW WE **LECTURED** HIM... TRIED TO **TEACH** HIM THAT HE MUSTN'T **TAKE** THINGS THAT DON'T **BELONG** TO HIM...'

BUT IT WAS IN THE **YARD**, DADDY. I JUST WANTED TO **PLAY** WITH IT A WHILE. I **DIDN'T** STEAL IT.

IT'S THE **SAME** AS **STEALING**. YOU **KNEW** IT WASN'T **YOURS**, AND YET YOU **KEPT** IT. THAT'S **DISHONEST**.



'THEY WERE ALWAYS SO **RIGHTEDUS**. THEY TRIED TO TEACH ME **HONESTY** BUT DID THEY SET A GOOD **EXAMPLE** FOR ME? I REMEMBER DISTINCTLY A FEW NIGHTS AFTER THE **TOY INCIDENT**, LISTENING TO MY FATHER **Bragging**...

SO THERE'S THIS **WALLET** LYING **RIGHT SMACK** IN THE **MIDDLE** OF THE **ROAD** WITH **TWO NICE CRISP TEN DOLLAR BILLS** IN IT. **HEHHEH. FIDNERS... KEEPER**S, I ALWAYS SAY!

NOW WE CAN GET THAT **LITTLE RACIO** WE'VE WANTED.



'AND WHEN HE STARTED GOING OUT WITH **GIRLS**! HOW WE TRIED TO MAKE SURE THEY WERE THE **RIGHT KIND**. REMEMBER THE TIME HE CAME HOME SO **LATE**? THE **LIPSTICK** ON HIS **COLLAR**...

LOOK AT THE **TIME**, MURRAY! LOOK AT HIS **SHIRT**. HE'S BEEN OUT WITH SOME **ND GOOD TRAMP**!

WHAT WERE YOU **DDING**, SON? **SNOOCHING** IN THE **BUSHES**? **NECKIN'**? TRYIN' TO...

GUT IT OUT, DAD!



'SHE WAS THE ONLY GIRL I EVER LOVED. SHE WAS SO **SWEET**, SO **WARM**. WE WENT TO A **DANCE**. ON THE WAY BACK TO TOWN THE **BUS** BROKE DOWN. SHE FELL ASLEEP ON MY **SHOULDER**. THAT'S HOW THE **LIPSTICK** GOT THERE. BUT MY FOLKS HAD TO TURN IT INTO SOMETHING **UGLY**. SOMETHING **DIRTY** AND **DEGRADING**...



'AND THE TIME HE **PICKED** ON THE **KID** DOWN THE **BLOCK**. A **GOOD** SIX INCHES SHORTER THAN **KENNY**. A YEAR YOUNGER AT LEAST. I WASN'T GOING TO HAVE A **BULLY** FOR A SON. **NOT ME**...

THAT'S **RIGHT**! YOU'RE A **BULLY**! **PICK** ON SOMEBODY YOUR **OWN SIZE**...OR ARE YOU **AFRAID**?


YOU...YOU WOULDN'T **UNDERSTAND**, DAD!



'HE CALLED ME A **BULLY**. HE NEVER EVEN **ASKED WHY** I DID IT. I WAS A **BULLY** AND THAT'S **ALL THERE WAS** TO IT. AND IT WAS **WRONG** FOR ME, BUT **RIGHT** FOR HIM... TO BE A **BULLY**!

HEH, HEH. YEP. OLD MAN **WILKENS** CLOSED HIS PLACE FOR **GOOD** TODAY. **WILMA**, I PUT THE **SQUEEZE** ON HIM... **UNDERSOLD** HIM ALL THE WAY. HE COULDN'T **AFFORD** THE **LOSSES**. I **COULD**. TOO **BAD**! **SMALL MAN**! **POOR**...






'HE NEVER APPRECIATED ANYTHING I DID FOR HIM, WILMA. THE STRINGS I HAD TO PULL TO GET HIM LINED UP FOR COLLEGE! THE PLANS I MADE! THE WONDERFUL PROFESSION I'D PLANNED FOR HIM. HE NEVER APPRECIATED IT!'

SOM. SOMEGAY, I'M GOING TO BE PROUD OF YOU. I ALWAYS WANTED TO BE A DOCTOR... BUT MY PA COULDN'T AFFORD IT. WELL, YOU'RE GOING TO BE ONE...YES, SIR! I'LL SEE TO IT! YES, SIR! MY SON...

OUT, OAO!


A DOCTOR!



'HOW WE SKIMPED AND SAVED AND DID WITHOUT SO THAT WE COULD PUT HIM THROUGH COLLEGE WHEN THE TIME CAME. HE NEVER COULD UNDERSTAND IT. HE WAS ALWAYS BITTER...'


I'M SORRY, KENNY. NO MONEY. NOT ONE CENT. WE'RE SAVING...TO PUT YOU THROUGH COLLEGE!

BUT I'VE GOT TO HAVE A QUARTER, MA! THERE'S A BALL GAME SATURDAY. WE'RE PLAYING TWO-BITS A MAN. I'VE GOT TO HAVE IT...



'THAT'S RIGHT! HE STOLE FROM YOUR POCKETBOOK! YOU CAUGHT HIM...AND I REMEMBER THE BEATING I GAVE HIM. HE DESERVED IT. WE SHOULD HAVE KNOWN THEN, WILMA... WE SHOULD HAVE KNOWN!'


YOU LITTLE THIEF! TAKE THAT... DIRTY SNEAK...AND THAT...



'THEY NEVER ASKED ME ANYTHING. THEY TOLD ME. KENNETH, YOU'LL DO THIS. KENNETH, YOU'LL SEE THAT. THEY WERE ALMOST ABNORMALLY PROTECTIVE. THEY NEVER LET ME MAKE MY OWN DECISIONS!'

BUT, I DON'T WANT TO BE A DOCTOR. I'M AFRAID OF...BLOOD... IT MAKES ME GICK.

THEN YOU'LL GET USED TO IT! YOU'RE GOING TO BE A DOCTOR BECAUSE I WANT YOU TO, AND WHAT I SAY GOES!



'COLLEGE WAS SO FAR AWAY. THAT BALL GAME WAS MORE IMPORTANT THAN ANYTHING TO ME. THE REST OF THE FELLOWS HAD ALLOWANCES. ALL I HAD WAS PROMISES OF A FUTURE COLLEGE CAREER. SURE I DID WRONG WHEN I TOOK THE MONEY. BUT...IF THEY'D ONLY BEEN UNDERSTANDING...'

KENNY! WHAT ARE YOU GOING?

MA! I...I...I HAD TO HAVE IT, MA! THE TWO-BITS!



'I WAS SORRY! I REALLY WAS! BUT I WASN'T A THIEF. I WASN'T, WAS MA A THIEF? DID SHE CONSIDER HERSELF A THIEF WHEN SHE'D GET UP IN THE MIDDLE OF THE NIGHT TO GO THROUGH OAO'S POCKETS AND HELP HERSELF? I SAW HER...'



'AND THEN, WHEN HE JOINED THAT ROWDY GANG, THEY WERE BAD, ALL OF THEM. REMEMBER THE SCENE WE HAD...HOW WE FORBID HIM FROM GOING OUT AT NIGHT WITH THEM? HOW HE WENT ANYWAY...'

LOOK, MA...PA. GET USED TO IT. I'M A BIG BOY. I CAN TAKE CARE OF MYSELF...AND I'LL DO AS I PLEASE.

KENNETH!
COME
BACK.
KENNETH!



'THEY WERE A BAD LOT...THAT GANG. REMEMBER THE NIGHT THEY BEAT UP THAT BOY? KENNY JOINED THEM...HELPED THEM. HE WAS NEVER BROUGHT UP TO HATE MINORITIES. YET HE HELPED THEM. WHY?

YOU BUM! YOU...YOU...WHERE DID YOU GET SUCH A CRAZY NOTION? THIS IS AMERICA! YOU DON'T GO BEATING UP PEOPLE BECAUSE THEY'RE DIFFERENT...

LEAVE ME ALONE, POP... WILL YUH?



'AND THEN, WHEN HE FINALLY GRADUATED HIGH SCHOOL, HE TOLD US...TOLD US HE'D MADE UP HIS MIND. THE UNGRATEFUL SNOT. THE UNGRATEFUL...

THAT'S RIGHT! I'M NOT GOING TO COLLEGE! I'M GOING OUT AND GET A JOB... EARN MY OWN MONEY...

BUT WE'VE SAVED... SKIMPED...SCOURNED...JUST TO PUT YOU THROUGH COLLEGE! IS THIS THE THANKS WE GET?



'I HAD TO GO. IT WAS MY TEST. I JOINED THAT GANG BECAUSE I ADMIRE THE FELLOWS IN IT. THEY WERE ALL INDEPENDENT. THEY WERE SYMBOLS. I LONGED TO BE INDEPENDENT TOO. SO I WENT OUT THAT NIGHT OVER MY FOLKS' OBJECTIONS...'

NINE O'CLOCK TONIGHT, KENNY! YOU SURE YOU CAN MAKE IT? I KNOW YOUR FOLKS...

I'LL MAKE IT, HICKY! DON'T WORRY!



'HE WAS SO RIGHTeous, MY POP! SO FAIR! WHERE DID HE THINK I GOT SUCH A CRAZY NOTION? DID HE THINK I MADE IT UP? I HEARD THINGS... IN MY OWN HOME, I HEARD THINGS...'

YOU LIVE IN A NEIGHBORHOOD FOR TWENTY YEARS AND THEN...JUST LIKE THAT...THEY START MOVIN' IN. YOU WAIT, WILMA. BEFORE YOU KNOW IT, THE LAND VALUES 'ROUND HERE WILL DROP! SOMETHIN' SHDULO BE DONE!




'I HAD TO GET THAT JOB AND EARN MY OWN MONEY! THEY COULDN'T UNDERSTAND! THEY NEVER COULD. ALL MY LIFE I'D BEGGED FOR EVERY DIME! I COULDN'T TAKE GIRLS ON DATES. I COULDN'T DO ANYTHING. THEY WERE ALWAYS SAYING IT FOR ME... I HAD TO...'

HI, KENNY. HEY, WE'RE GOIN' TO THE MOVIES TONIGHT. GET A GIRL AND JOIN US. NO STAGS, NOW!

TH-THANKS, HICKY...IF I DECIDE, I'LL MEET YOU...






I DON'T KNOW WHAT HAPPENED TO HIM AFTER THAT, WILMA. I JUST DON'T KNOW. HE USED TO COME HOME AT ALL HOURS... SNAP AT US... DISAPPEAR FOR DAYS AT A TIME...

KENNY!
KENNY...


YOUR MOTHER'S BEEN FRANTIC, KENNY. WHERE HAVE YOU BEEN FOR TWO NIGHTS...

NO PLACE!
LEAVE ME ALONE!



G'MON, KENNY, BABY! TRY ONE, JUST ONE PUFF! S'MATTER? SCARED, BIG BOY?

MEH! SCARED?! GIM'ME THAT REEFER!




I KNEW SOMETHING WAS WRONG WITH HIM. I KNEW IT THE MINUTE I SAW HIM THE NIGHT HE CAME HOME FOR... FOR THE LAST TIME. HIS EYES!

I NEED DUGH, MA. I NEED IT BAD. CAN YOU LEND ME TWENTY BUCKS?


KENNY.
MY BABY...

GET OUT!
GET OUT OF HERE AND DON'T EVER COME BACK!



THEY FAILED ME! WHEN I NEEDED THEM MOST, THEY FAILED ME! THE REEFERS HAD LEO TO STRONGER STUFF... UNTIL I'D BECOME AN ADDICT. I COULDN'T PAY FOR IT, AND THEY FAILED ME...

I'VE GOT TO GET THE DUGH!
I'VE GOT TO GET IT SOMEWHERE!




THE MINUTE I SAW THE COP, I KNEW KENNY'D DONE SOMETHING WRONG. I COULDO SEE IT ON THE COP'S FACE WHEN I OPENED THE DOOR TO HIS RING...

WHERE'S YOUR BOY, MR. VORHEES? I WANT HIM!

I... I DON'T KNOW, OFFICER!

WHAT DID HE DO, OFFICER?



I'D WAITED IN THE PARK, WAITED UNTIL SOMEONE'D COME ALONG. I WAS DESPERATE. I HAD TO HAVE IT, AND ONLY MONEY WOULD GIVE IT TO ME...

DON'T SCREAM! JUST GIVE ME YOUR POCKET-BOOK AND...

EEEEEEEE...

THE MAN AND THE WOMAN SAT IN THE LIVING-ROOM WATCHING THE MANTEL CLOCK FINGERS POINT TO ELEVEN. THE MAN GRIMACED...THE WOMAN SOBBED AS THE CHIMES BEGAN...



AND AS THE ELEVENTH CHIME ECHOED THROUGH THE HOUSE AND FADED AWAY, THE WOMAN SIGHEQ...THE MAN CURSED...

WHAT DO WE EVER DO TO DESERVE THIS? HOW COULD HE DO THIS TO US? WE... WE DID ALL WE COULD FOR HIM!



WHAT WILL PEOPLE THINK? WHAT ABOUT MY BUSINESS?

THE BOY SAT IN THE ELECTRIC CHAIR FEELING THE FIRST SHOCKING HIGH VOLTAGE EXPLODE THROUGH HIS BODY...



AND EVEN AS HIS LIFE FAGED FROM HIS BLISTERED AND SWOLLEN BODY, THE BOY WONDERED...

HOW DID IT HAPPEN? WHY DID I TURN OUT LIKE THIS? I GUESS IT'S BECAUSE I DIDN'T LISTEN TO MY FOLKS. I GUESS..I WAS JUST A BAD SON.



THE
END

SHOCK TALK

President and CEO—Stephen A. Geppi

Publisher—Russ Cochran

Dear Russ,

SHOCK #9 had more shock-value than a hairpin in an electrical outlet. It was great! My wife, Valerie, thought the cover on this one was absolutely horrifying, and I must admit that I could hardly disagree with her! Mr. Feldstein's genius for cover art never ceases to astound me.

"The October Game" was sure an eye-opener. I always thought that was just a couple of peeled grapes and some spaghetti which was being passed my way. Now I know better. "The Maddlers!" was a gruesome little tale as well. But for sheer gut-wrenching disgust, "Carnion Death!" just couldn't be beaten! It was horrible, awful, twisted, delightful, fun, tasty—um, maybe I better just stop there.

Jim Davis

Pulman, WA

I think that "October Game" by Ray Bradbury in SHOCK #9 was definitely the most horrific of all the horror stories that came out this July. What makes the story so chilling is the fact that this respectable-looking guy kills his own daughter just to get even with his wife. Bradbury does not completely spell it out for you at the end, but he makes you figure it out for yourself. One weakness of the three Ghoulunatics is that they always explain the ending when they should sometimes let the readers figure it out for themselves. Like they say that a joke is never so funny when you have to explain the punchline to someone. The one notable exception where the Ghoulunatics didn't hold your hand at the end was, of course, "Wolf Ball!" (HAUNT 13, yet to come) A company that I worked for once threw me to the wolves, but that's another story.

Speaking of "Wolf Ball!", here is a tip for Dave Rodriguez. You must carefully consider all of the available information about each of the four characters. Then you must choose which one that YOU would sacrifice, and that is the one that got thrown off the sleigh. For what it is worth here is my analysis of who the wolf ball is:

*

Warren Standiford

Sunnyvale, CA

Your analysis deleted for use when we run the story (in HAUNT 13). Down, boy!

Also available this month are CRYPT and WEIRD SCIENCE. Watch for VAULT, WEIRD FANTASY and TWO-FISTED next month. Don't forget HAUNT, INCREDIBLE SCIENCE FICTION and CRIME. Out there at your local comic book shop or SUBSCRIBE (see our ad in this comic for details).

BACK ISSUES: CRYPT #1, \$2 each (subject to availability). All others up thru issue #3, \$1.60 each, issues #4 and up, \$2 each. Add \$6 per order (\$10 outside US) per S&H.

We want MORE letters! Write to:

SHOCK
RUSS COCHRAN
POB 469
WEST PLAINS MO 65775

**THIS COMIC REPRINTS
SHOCK SUSPENSIONSTORIES "10" (AUG/SEP 53)**

COVER by Jack Kamen

"The Sacrifice"

"...So Shall Ye Reap!"

"Home Run!"

"Sweetie-Pie!"

Jack Kamen

Wally Wood

Joe Orlando

Reed Crandall



A little glimpse behind the scenes of EC: We have no idea, specifically, why the change was made but the third panel of page 4 of "...So Shall Ye Reap!" was changed between the time color guides were prepared and the book was printed. It is the color guide's panel we run here.

Perhaps coincidentally, perhaps not, SHOCK 10's letter page was to have been a diatribe against an accusation of obscenity in EC comics. As actually run, the "editorial" shrank to two paragraphs, dropped the word obscenity and apologized for having offended some readers.

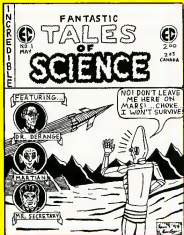
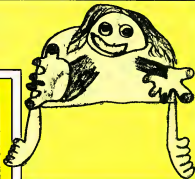
It would have been fun to have been a fly on the wall at 225 Lafayette Street that summer!

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We welcome letters of comment. We cannot promise to acknowledge, publish or answer letters. We ask for clarity, accuracy and length. We automatically withhold street address and do not release you directly after you write them. We attempt to acknowledge publication of letters. If so we need your address on the individual letter.

I've heard of ingrown toenail, but not outgrown toenail! Still and all, that must be me as a barefoot boy as drawn by Alex Sebout, Phoenix, AZ. This will be a special all-graphic issue of THE CRYPT-KEEPER's PAGE OF...

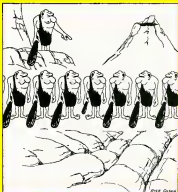
FINE ARTS #23



ANOTHER BOGUS comic cover, again from Sam Rowley, Anchorage, AK. Could that be the famous robot with a car battery for a heart, Adem Link? —CK



WHY IS this skull smiling? Because he's been hanging around the EC offices all day, and no one's mistaken him once for that ugly pug with the misshapen mug, The Vault-Keeper! —CK



"AND THIS YEAR— NOBEL PEACE PRIZE GO... TO... KRAGG!"

WHO SAYS we're not PC (Potentially Correct)? A thoughty thought-piece from Rick Olsen of Minneapolis, MN. I like it! (Will someone explain it to me?) —CK

WHY NO text pieces this lah? Simple. A job-related injury. I sprained my lip reading submissions. But I'll be better soon and when I am, look out! —CK

Send your contribs (not returnable, not too long, not too big, legible doublespaced text &/or bold black art. Warning...we edit) to:

THE CRYPT-KEEPER'S PAGE OF FINE ARTS

RUSS COCHRAN
POB 469
WEST PLAINS MO 65775

We welcome contributions. We cannot promise to return, acknowledge or publish contributions. We edit for clarity, accuracy and style. We summarily withhold email address and zip code unless you clearly state you wish them published. We consent to acknowledge publication. To do so we need your address on the individual contribution.

OPERATION!



The anaesthetist turned the wheel on the gleaming instrument panel, at one side of the operating table. There was an almost imperceptible hiss; when the quivering needle reach half-way toward the area marked FULL, the anaesthetist relaxed his grip on the wheel. He turned and nodded to the battery of doctors waiting tensely beside the surgery table.

"The patient is under the influence of anaesthesia," he said nervously, indicating the figure stretched silently before them. "The Generalissimo is ready for surgery!"

The anaesthetist stepped back, a nerve twitching at his temple as he eyed the grim men in bowler hats standing around the room like angels of evil. The Secret Police, the anaesthetist thought fearfully. Wherever the Dictator moves, these gunmen go also. The recent scandals about doctors murdering high government officials is making them redouble their vigilance. Imagine if something happened to the Leader while he was undergoing SURGERY . . . !

The Chief Surgeon spoke sharply, a flicker of fear in his eyes as he looked at the anaesthetist. Apprehension permeated the room as the anaesthetist stepped forward and examined the instrument panel. Slowly, with great delicacy, the anaesthetist moved the dial forward slightly, toward FULL. The hiss grew instantly louder, like a wave falling upon a distant beach.

There was a sudden grunt; without turning the anaesthetist was aware of movement behind him. It was a man in a bowler hat, his jaw set belligerently, barking out something

about having trapped a traitor determined to kill the Leader! The dial was perilously close to FULL when the anaesthetist was seized and heard accusations spat in his face. The control wheel, he realized just before he fainted from terror, had been jammed by the sudden motion. The louder hiss was ample evidence that it was stuck at FULL!

* * * * *

The Leader felt as if he was floating strangely, high over the vast lands he dominated. Through the curious haze that enveloped him as he floated, he was aware of a frightening heaviness inside his head, as if his skin were being stretched drum-tight. He tried to cry out that it was all a mistake . . . why was he swelling with such incredible speed, like a grotesque balloon? What was this strange hissing in his ears . . . this painful bloating . . . as if he was being pumped full of air? He tried to scream, but his mouth had become buried under deep layers of fat, his nostrils clogged with his own agonized skin. He was drowning . . . struggling frantically to gulp air into his tortured lungs . . . when the hiss grew in volume until all else was being blotted out by the ghastly roar in his brain. Then there was a dreadful ripping sound, and he felt himself spinning in a pool of blood . . .

* * * * *

The explosion reverberated through the shocked room. "T-The Leader!" whispered the Chief Surgeon in horror, looking at the gruesome mess still writhing on the table in front of him. The man in the bowler hat stared as if hypnotized, releasing the arm of the still unconscious anaesthetist, apparently unaware of the stream of blood that had spurted over him . . . of the still-jerking nerve ends that had splattered over his coat. "Our g-glorious Leader," he said in awe. H-He . . . he must've been overdosed with Gas! He BLEW UP!

HOME RUN!

THERE WAS A SILENCE SURROUNDING THE ROCKET-SHIP... A MAJESTIC SILENCE THAT ECHOED OF THE VAST VACUUM OF SPACE AROUND IT. INSIDE ITS GLEAMING HULL, THE FOUR EARTHMEN STOOD IN AWE, THEIR EYES GLUED ON THE VIEW-SCREEN BEFORE THEM, WATCHING MARS SWEEP TOWARD THEM... RED MARS, MYSTERIOUS MARS. FOR A WHILE, THEY DID NOT SPEAK. THEY ONLY STOOD, AS IF LOST IN PRAYER TO THE RUST-COLORED GLOBULAR IDOL. THEN, FINALLY, ONE OF THEM WHISPERED...

IN A FEW HOURS, WE
WILL BE THERE...
THE FIRST HUMAN
BEINGS TO REACH
MARS!

... AND WE OWE IT ALL TO
YOU, DOCTOR MULLER!
MANKIND OWES IT ALL
TO YOU!

YOU SHOULD BE VERY PROUD,
DOCTOR MULLER. WITHOUT
YOUR GENIUS, MAN WOULD
STILL BE GROVELING BACK
THERE ON EARTH... FIRING
ROCKETS BUT A FEW HUN-
DRED MILES BEYOND THE
ATMOSPHERE... TRYING
AGAIN AND AGAIN... AND
ALWAYS FAILING! YOU,
ALONE, HAVE CONQUERED
SPACE.

THERE IS A
DRIVE WITHIN
EACH OF US,
GENTLEMEN.
A DRIVE
TOWARDS A
DISTANT, OFTEN
UNATTAINABLE
GOAL. MINE
WAS THIS...
REACHING
MARS!



DOCTOR MULLER'S VOICE WAS SOFT, ALMOST SING-
SONG. HE SPOKE AS IF HE'D OFTEN REHEARSED THE
WORDS THAT FLOWED FROM HIS MOUTH. HIS EYES
WERE GLUED ON THE RED-SPHERE LOOMING LARGER
AND LARGER ON THE VIEW-SCREEN...

TWO YEARS AGO, THE MAN YOU SEE STANDING BEFORE
YOU WAS AN OBSCURE ATOMIC SCIENTIST WORKING IN
ONE OF THE MANY A.E.C. LABORATORIES. HIS JOB
WAS MOSTLY ROUTINE... READING GAUGES AND DIALS,
RECORDING, TESTING, REPORTING. HE WAS NOTHING
BUT A COG IN THE HUGE MACHINE OF ATOMIC
DEVELOPMENT.



BUT SOMETHING HAPPENED TO THAT OLD DOCTOR
MULLER. SOMETHING CHANGED HIM INTO THE MAN YOU
SEE. IT WAS LIKE AN AWAKENING... A REBIRTH. I
REMEMBER NOW, ONE MORNING, I LEFT MY STATION AT
THE PILE AND WALKED INTO MY SUPERVISOR'S OFFICE...

DOCTOR CAXTON. I WOULD
LIKE TO BE TRANSFERRED!

WHA...? TRANS-
FERRED? BUT,
MULLER! I
THOUGHT YOU WERE
SO HAPPY HERE!



A SCIENCE-FICTION SUSPENSORY

YOU THOUGHT WRONG, SIR. I AM NOT HAPPY HERE! I WANT TO BE TRANSFERRED TO RESEARCH... ENGINE RESEARCH!

MULLER! YOU SURPRISE ME! YOU'VE ALWAYS SEEMED CONTENT TO OPERATE THE PILE AND RECORD YOUR FINDINGS...

PERHAPS IT SEEMED THAT WAY TO YOU, SIR, BUT REGARDLESS OF HOW IT LOOKED, I DESPISED THE WORK. MY MIND WAS OUT THERE... ON THE STARS...

STARS? ARE YOU INTERESTED IN SPACE TRAVEL, MULLER?

I AM... DESPERATELY!

BUT SPACE-TRAVEL IS YEARS OFF. YOU MAY NEVER LIVE TO SEE IT.



SPACE TRAVEL COULD BE HERE TOMORROW WITH THE PROPER ENGINE. AND I THINK I CAN DEVELOP THAT ENGINE. I WANT THAT CHANCE...

ALL RIGHT, MULLER. I'M SORRY TO SEE YOU GO! HEAVEN KNOWS YOU'VE BEEN A DEVOTED WORKER. AND, QUITE FRANKLY, I DIDN'T KNOW YOU HAD IT IN YOU TO DO RESEARCH, BUT IF IT'S WHAT YOU WANT...



AND SO, A WEEK LATER I WAS TRANSFERRED, AS PER MY REQUEST, TO THE RESEARCH DIVISION OF THE ATOMIC ENERGY COMMISSION, ATOMIC ENGINE DEVELOPMENT SECTION...

GLAD TO HAVE YOU WITH US, DOCTOR MULLER. THE FACILITIES OF THE LABORATORY ARE ALL YOURS. IS THERE ANY PARTICULAR PHASE OF OUR WORK THAT YOU ARE INTERESTED IN?

I AM INTERESTED IN DEVELOPING AN EFFICIENT ATOMIC ENGINE CAPABLE OF POWERING A ROCKET-SHIP, SIR!



I REMEMBER HOW MY NEW SUPERIOR LAUGHED...

A ROCKET-SHIP ENGINE? REALLY, DOCTOR MULLER! LET US BE PRACTICAL. WE HAVE DEVELOPED AN ATOMIC-ENGINE FOR AN AIRPLANE, AND WE HAVE DONE THE SAME FOR A SUBMARINE, BUT THE AMOUNT OF ENERGY NEEDED IS SMALL COMPARED TO THAT NEEDED FOR A ROCKET-SHIP.

I AM AWARE OF THAT, SIR. BUT I HAVE SOME THEORIES... AND I WOULD LIKE TO TRY.



...HOW HE SHRUGGED...

ALL RIGHT. BUT I'M AFRAID OUR ATOMIC KNOW-HOW AT THE PRESENT TIME PROHIBITS SUCH A PROJECT. HOWEVER... IF YOUR HEART IS SET ON IT... GO AHEAD AND TRY!

THANK YOU, SIR.



'AND SO I SET TO WORK. IN LESS THAN TWO MONTHS, I HAD COMPLETED MY DESIGNS.'

YOU ASKED TO SEE ME, MULLER. YES, SIR. I HAVE SOMETHING I WOULD LIKE TO SHOW YOU...



'I SPREAD MY BLUE-PRINT DESIGNS BEFORE MY SUPERIOR...'

IF MY CALCULATIONS ARE CORRECT, SIR, THIS ENGINE WILL DELIVER A THRUST-FORCE CAPABLE OF DRIVING SIX TIMES ITS WEIGHT TO A SPEED OF SEVEN MILES PER SECOND...

GOOD LORD. THAT'S... ESCAPE VELOCITY!



'I NODDED...'

YES SIR, ESCAPE VELOCITY... THE SPEED NEEDED TO BREAK AWAY FROM EARTH'S GRAVITATIONAL FIELD...

I... I'M SPEECHLESS, MULLER. YOU... YOU HAVE MY PERMISSION TO GO AHEAD WITH THE CONSTRUCTION OF THIS ENGINE...



'WORK ON THE ENGINE BEGAN. AT THE END OF ONE YEAR, IT WAS COMPLETED. THE DAY WE WERE TO TEST MY ENGINE ARRIVED. IT HAD BEEN SET UP IN A DESERTED SECTION OF THE ARMY PROVING GROUNDS AT WHITE SANDS. A SMALL CROWD OF HIGH GOVERNMENT OFFICIALS AND ARMY BRASS WERE PRESENT.'



READY, MULLER?

READY, SIR!

'THE ENGINE HAD BEEN ENCLOSED IN A SMALL SQUARE CONCRETE BUILDING LINED WITH SEVEN-INCH WALLS TO PROTECT THE OBSERVING PARTY FROM RADIATION. WE STOOD AT A SAFE DISTANCE, WHERE A CONTROL PANEL HAD BEEN SET UP. I THREW THE SWITCH. A DULL ROAR, INCREASING IN VOLUME, THUNDERED ACROSS THE DESERT.'



0...6...7...8...9 MILES PER SECOND...

INCREDIBLE!

'I TURNED THE ENGINE OFF. THE GROUND BELOW OUR FEET STOPPED VIBRATING. THE THUNDER ECHED AWAY INTO SILENCE. THE GATHERED OBSERVERS LOOKED AT EACH OTHER...'



A ROCKET-SHIP, DRIVEN BY THAT ENGINE, WOULD BE CAPABLE OF REACHING THE MOON, GENTLEMEN!

MULLER, YOU'RE TO BE CONGRATULATED. YOU'VE DONE YOUR COUNTRY A GREAT SERVICE.

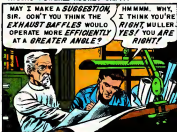
I HAVE A REQUEST, SIR!

I WOULD LIKE TO BE GIVEN PERMISSION TO HELP WITH THE DESIGNING OF THE ROCKET-SHIP WHICH MY ENGINE WILL POWER.

OF COURSE, MULLER. OF COURSE.



'AND SO, AGAIN I WAS TRANSFERRED... THIS TIME TO THE ARMY AIR FORCE ROCKET AND GUIDED MISSILE DIVISION. THERE, FOR THE NEXT FEW MONTHS, ENGINEERS AND DRAFTSMEN WORKED ON THE DESIGNS AND SPECIFICATIONS OF THE FIRST ATOMIC-POWERED ROCKET-SHIP...'



'I HELPED WHEREVER I COULD... MAKING SUGGESTIONS. REDESIGNING... CHANGING. FINALLY, ACTUAL CONSTRUCTION BEGAN...'



'YOU KNOW THE REST, GENTLEMEN... THE ARGUMENTS AND DEBATES. I FOUGHT DESPERATELY FOR THE MARS OBJECTIVE. AND I WON...'



'THE SECONDS TICKED OFF. I THREW THE SWITCH. MY ENGINE ROARED. OUR MARS BOUND SHIP SHUDDERED. THEN LEAPED INTO THE STAR-STUDDED SKY...'



THERE WAS A SILENCE SURROUNDING THE ROCKET-SHIP... A MAJESTIC SILENCE THAT ECHOED OF THE VAST VACUUM OF SPACE AROUND IT. DOCTOR MULLER STARED AT THE NEARING RED SPHERE...

YES, GENTLEMEN. THERE IS A *DRIVE* WITHIN EACH OF US. *NIHE* WAS TO REACH MARS!

WHEN DID YOU *FIRST* FEEL THIS COMPULSION, DOCTOR?



THE *GUY* THAT SUDDENLY APPEARED IN DOCTOR MULLER'S HAND UNDERLINED EMPHATICALLY HIS STATEMENT...

I'M NOT JOKING, GENTLEMEN! I *CRASHED ON EARTH OVER TWO YEARS AGO!* I TOLD YOU THAT THE MAN STANDING BEFORE YOU WAS AN *OBSCURE ATOMIC SCIENTIST*. WELL, HE WAS!



'AND I... I AM A *MARTIAN*. MY TRUE SHAPE IS THAT OF AN *EVER-CHANGING PROTOPLASMIC MASS* CAPABLE OF ASSUMING THE SHAPE OF WHATEVER I ABSORB. I SLITHERED FROM MY WRECKED SCOUT-SHIP UNHURT...'



DOCTOR MULLER TURNED AND SMILED...

WHEN I *CRASHED ON EARTH*, GENTLEMEN.

G-CRASHED?! OH, COME, MULLER. DON'T JOKE WITH US!



'AND I KNEW THAT I HAD TO GET BACK TO MARS... MY HOME... AT ALL COSTS. BUT YOU... YOU *EARTHLINGS*... HAD NOT DEVELOPED SPACE-FLIGHT. AND THEN I HIT UPON MY *PLAN*. I DESTROYED THE REMAINS OF MY SHIP...'



'I MOVED ACROSS YOUR WORLD BY NIGHT, KEEPING HIDDEN, UNTIL I FOUND WHAT I WAS LOOKING FOR. DOCTOR MULLER...'

THAT SUCKING, GULPING SOUND?! WHO... WHO'S THERE? GOOD LORD!



'YES, GENTLEMEN. I *PICKED ON DOCTOR MULLER*. I ABSORBED HIM... ASSIMILATED HIM...'



... I BECAME HIM... ASSUMED HIS SHAPE...'

THE FIGURE BEFORE THEM, BRANDING THE GUN.
CONTINUED...

WHAT BETTER METHOD COULD I HAVE USED TO RETURN TO MARS THAN TO HELP YOU EARTHINGS DEVELOP THE MEANS...SPACE-TRAVEL. THIS WAS LIKE CHILD'S PLAY FOR ME, COMPARING THIS TO THE SPACE-SHIP'S WE HAVE IS LIKE COMPARING YOUR BICYCLES TO YOUR JET-PLANES! BUT I HAD TO BE CAREFUL! I COULDN'T AFFORD TO AROUSE SUSPICION!



IT WILL CONTINUE! THERE WILL BE MORE TRIPS... MORE ABSORPTIONS... UNTIL ENOUGH OF US ARE ON EARTH TO CONQUER IT, YOU... GET HIM!



THEY STRUGGLED. A SHOT RANG OUT...



THE FIGURE POINTED TO THE VIEW-SCREEN...

IN A FEW MINUTES WE ARE GOING TO LAND. OTHERS LIKE ME WILL BE WAITING... READY TO ASSIMILATE AND ABSORB YOU JUST AS I HAVE ABSORBED DOCTOR MULLER, AND WE WILL RETURN AGAIN TO EARTH. IT IS THE BEGINNING...



DOCTOR MULLER FELL TO THE ALLOY DECK FLOOR... A BULLET HOLE IN HIS CHEST...



THE SHIP CAME DOWN... KICKING UP THE RED DUST, IT CAME TO REST ON THE RED-PLANET'S SURFACE. THE THREE EARTHINGS ROSE FROM THEIR SHOCK-COUCHES...



MARS? WE'VE REACHED MARS?

TOO BAD MULLER DIDN'T LIVE TO SEE IT!

MULLER...? HE... HE... LOOK!

ON THE DECK, WHERE MULLER'S BODY HAD BEEN, THERE NOW LAY A SHAPELESS QUIVERING PROTOPLASMIC MASS.



GOOD LORD! HE... HE...

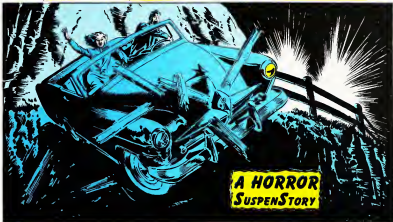
LISTEN!

BELOW, THE THREE EARTHINGS HEARD THE UNMISTAKABLE CLANG OF THE SHIP'S PORT, AND THEN, ALMOST IMPERCEPTIBLY, THE SOUNDS...THE SLITHERING, SUCKING, GULPING SOUNDS...

THE END 5

SWEETIE-PIE

SALLY SCREAMED. PHILIP'S CRY OF DISMAY RATTLED IN HIS THROAT AS HE SPUN THE WHEEL OF HIS SPEEDING CONVERTIBLE...SWERVING TO AVOID THE GLARING HEADLIGHTS AHEAD...CAREENING OFF THE ROAD TO AVOID THE IMMINENT HEAD-ON COLLISION. THE CLOAK OF NIGHT WAS SUDDENLY PIERCED WITH THE KNIFE-BLADE OF SQUEALING BRAKES. TWO TONS OF METAL AND GLASS AND RUBBER AND HUMAN FLESH EXPLODED THROUGH THE GUARD-RAIL AT THE ROAD EDGE. THERE WAS A SPLINTERING SHRIEKING CRASH AS THE CAR LEAPED INTO THE NIGHT, OVER THE EMBANKMENT, AND DOWN THE SHEER FACE OF THE RAVINE...



THE BLACK BLANKET OF UNCONSCIOUSNESS DESCENDED OVER PHILIP WHERE HE LAY IN THE TALL GRASS, THROWN CLEAR OF THE SMASHED AUTOMOBILE. IT DESCENDED LIKE A CURTAIN, CLOSING OFF THE NIGHT-SOUNDS ... STILLING SALLY'S SCREAMS OF PAIN...



PHILIP FLOATED IN A WHIRLPOOL, SPINNING SLOWLY, REMEMBERING THE ETERNAL SECONDS BEFORE THE CRASH... REMEMBERING SALLY'S GASP...



THEY'D BEEN MARRIED ONLY A FEW HOURS, PHILIP AND SALLY. THEY'D BEEN SPEEDING NORTHWARD TOWARD THE LITTLE HOTEL THEY'D CHOSEN FOR THEIR HONEYMOON, AND SALLY'D WARNED HIM...

PLEASE, PHILIP, DARLING!
DON'T DRIVE SO FAST! IT
MAKES ME NERVOUS!

IS IT MY DRIVING,
BABY, OR THE FACT
THAT YOU'RE A
BRAND NEW
BRIDE?



PHILIP'S STORY HAD BEEN A GORY ONE. THERE'D BEEN SEVERAL SERIOUS AUTOMOBILE WRECKS IN THE AREA... AND ALL OF THEM WERE THE SAME...

THIS IS O'HARA... STATE PATROL. YEAH. ANOTHER ONE! PILED UP ON ROUTE NINE ABOUT SEVEN MILES OUT. YEAH. SAME DEAL...



NO BODIES IN THE WRECK.
NOT A SIGN OF ONE... ANYWHERE
AROUND.



WHEREVER THESE WRECKS OCCURRED... AND THEY'D BECOME MORE AND MORE FREQUENT... THE VICTIMS HAD JUST DISAPPEARED...

PEOPLE JUST DON'T WALK AWAY FROM SMASH-UPS LIKE THAT PHIL. NOT EVERY TIME! SOME OF THOSE WRECKS WERE BAD ENOUGH TO KILL... YET THERE WEREN'T ANY BODIES! GET ON THIS, EH, BOY? SEE WHAT YOU CAN DIG UP!

VERY FUNNY!
OKAY, CHIEF.



AFTER EACH WRECK, THE OWNER OF THE CAR HAD BEEN TRACED THROUGH THE REGISTRATION. PHIL HAD INTERVIEWED THE FAMILY OF ONE...

HE NEVER CAME HOME. HE JUST VANISHED. SOMETHING'S HAPPENED TO HIM. I KNOW IT!

I'M SURE HE'LL TURN UP, MA'AM!



PHILIP HAD TAKEN A WELL-EARNED VACATION FROM HIS JOB AS A REPORTER FOR THE CONSOLIDATED PRESS SERVICE TO MARRY SALLY. HE'D LEFT IN SPITE OF THE FACT THAT A BIG STORY HE'D BEEN WORKING ON HAD NOT, AS YET, BEEN CONCLUDED...

WHAT DO YOU MEAN, YOU'RE GETTING MARRIED?? HERE WE ARE IN THE MIDDLE OF THE BIGGEST STORY TO COME FROM THESE PARTS IN YEARS, AND YOU WANT TO TAKE OFF!

PUT WILLIAMS ON IT, CHIEF. I HAVE A HUNCH IT WON'T BREAK TILL I GET BACK ANYWAY!



AND THEN THE FIRST BODY'D BEEN FOUND... WEEKS LATER... MILES FROM THE SCENE OF THE ACCIDENT...

MAMA. DADDY. COME QUICK. LOOK. WHERE? WHA... A MAN. SLEEPING. CHOKO...



HE'D BEEN DRIVING ONE OF THE CARS THAT HAD BEEN WRECKED. HE'D BEEN A HIGH-SCHOOL PRINCIPAL... THEY'D TAKEN HIS CORPSE INTO TOWN TO THE MORGUE... PERFORMED AN AUTOPSY...

HIS BLOOD HAS BEEN COMPLETELY DRAINED FROM HIS BODY. NOTICE THE TWO PUNCTURE MARKS IN HIS THROAT...



ONE OF PHILIP'S FELLOW REPORTERS... NOTED FOR HIS SENSE OF HUMOR... HAD INTIMATED...

IT'S THE WORK OF A VAMPIRE, PHIL. OL' BOY! A VAMPIRE!

YOU'RE CRAZY, EDDIE. VAMPIRES ARE MYTHS.



BUT MORE BOODIES BEGAN TO APPEAR, SCATTERED ABOUT THE COUNTRYSIDE, AND EACH OF THEM BORE...

...THE SAME TWO PUNCTURE-MARKS IN THE THROAT!

SEE, PHILLY? WHAT DO YOU SAY NOW?!



IT WAS CRAZY, BUT WHAT ELSE COULD PHILIP BELIEVE...

A VAMPIRE! BAH! YOU'VE BEEN SEEING TOO MANY 'B' PICTURES!

THEN YOU EXPLAIN IT, CHIEF. EACH OF THE BODIES FOUND HAD BEEN INVOLVED IN ONE OF THOSE AUTO-MOBILE WRECKS WE'VE BEEN HAVING, AND EACH OF THEM WAS DRAINED OF ITS BLOOD! GOT A BETTER ANSWER?



THE CHIEF HAD LAUGHED...

AND I SUPPOSE YOUR VAMPIRE CAUSED THOSE WRECKS SO IT COULD OBTAIN VICTIMS...

I HADN'T THOUGHT ABOUT IT, BUT IT'S AS GOOD A REASON AS ANY!



THE POLICE HAD LAUGHED AT PHILIP'S THEORY...

WE'VE ONLY RECOVERED FOUR BODIES SO FAR, PHIL. WE'VE HAD OVER TEN WRECKS. HOW DO YOU EXPLAIN THAT?

THE OTHER VICTIMS WILL TURN UP SOON. YOU'LL SEE, LIEUTENANT!



BUT PHIL'D BEEN WRONG, THERE'D BEEN MORE WRECKS, BUT OUT OF THE TOTAL NUMBER, FOURTEEN, ONLY SIX BODIES HAD BEEN FOUND...

I CAN'T UNDERSTAND IT, SALLY! WHY HAVEN'T THEY FOUND THE OTHER BODIES INVOLVED IN THE WRECKS?

WHY CAN'T YOU FORGET YOUR GRUESOME STORY AND COME KISS ME, HONEY?



GONE. YEP. GONE. NOT A TRACE. BETTER SEND THE WRECKING CREW AROUND. WE'LL COMB THE AREA JUST IN CASE...

THEY'VE GOT TO LISTEN TO ME, NOW, SALLY. THEY'VE GOT TO. IT IS A VAMPIRE.

PHIL, I'VE WAITED AS LONG AS I CAN! IF YOU DON'T MARRY ME TOMORRO

REPEAT AFTER ME. I, PHILIP
GARSON, TAKE THIS WOMAN, SALLY,
AS MY LAWFULLY WEDDED WIFE...
TO LOVE AND CHERISH... IN
SICKNESS AND...

PHIL, PLEASE!
DON'T *DRIVE*
SO FAST. IT'S
GETTING *DARK*
AND...

IT MAKES ME SO
MAD, SALLY!
IF THEY'O ONLY
LISTEN...

A man in a yellow suit is shown floating in a blue, swirling vortex. The man is positioned in the center of the vortex, with his arms and legs spread out. The vortex is composed of many concentric, swirling lines of blue, creating a sense of motion and depth. The background is black, which makes the blue vortex and the yellow suit stand out.

PHILIP OPENED HIS EYES. THE BLANKET LIFTED. HE LOOKED TOWARD THE MASS OF TWISTED STEEL AND SMASHED GLASS AND TORN CANVAS THAT HAD ONCE BEEN HIS CONVERTIBLE. HE SAW THE FIGURE BEND OVER SALLY'S STILL BODY, LIFTING IT...



HE TRIED TO CRY OUT. NO SOUND CAME FROM HIS THROAT. HE TRIED TO MOVE. HE WAS PARALYZED. HE COULD ONLY LIE THERE WATCHING THE FIGURE CARRY SALLY BACK UP THE SLOPE TO THE WAITING STATION-WAGON...



HE COULD ONLY LIE AND WAIT UNTIL THE FIGURE RETURNED FOR HIM...



HE FELT HIMSELF LIFTED, CARRIED, PLUNGED INTO THE REAR OF THE STATION WAGON BESIDE SALLY'S MOTIONLESS BODY...



AND THEN, THE BLANKET DESCENDED ONCE MORE WITH THE MESHING OF GEARS AS THE STATION WAGON PULLED AWAY...



WHEN HE CAME TO AGAIN, HE FOUND HIMSELF INSIDE A DARKENED ROOM. HE WAS COLD. IT WAS AS IF THE ROOM WERE REFRIGERATED. AND AROUND HIM...



... AROUND HIM LAY OTHER BODIES... BODIES RIGID WITH RIGOR MORTIS... BODIES BLUE FROM THE COLD... BODIES WITH SMALL PUNCTURE MARKS IN THEIR THROATS...



HE TRIED TO MOVE. HE COULDN'T. HE TRIED TO CRY OUT. AGAIN THE SOUND SEEMED TO DIE IN HIS THROAT. HE LAY THERE...SHIVERING...LISTENING. AND THEN HE HEARD THE SOUND...THE STRANGE THROBBING SOUND... COMING FROM BEHIND A DOOR.



WAS SALLY STILL ALIVE... OR WAS SHE AT THIS VERY MOMENT SLIPPING INTO THE ARMS OF DEATH... HER BLOOD BEING SUCKED FROM HER BODY BY THIS FIENDISH VAMPIRE.



HER NAME ECHOED THROUGH THE GOLD ROOM. PHILIP'S VOICE HAD RETURNED. HE SCREAMED...



THE THROBBING SOUND DIED AWAY. FOOTSTEPS APPROACHED, THE DOOR SWUNG OPEN...



THE FIGURE MOVED FORWARD, LEERING...



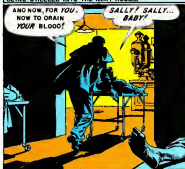
PHILIP TRIED TO MOVE. HE COULDN'T...



I MERELY SET UP TWO LAMPS ON TRIPODS AT THE PROPER LOCATION AND WAIT. WHEN MY VICTIM'S CAR APPROACHES, I SNAP THEM ON. THE CAR SWERVES... AND I HAVE WHAT I NEED...



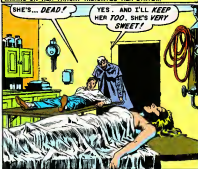
PHILIP FELT THINGS MOVING PAST HIM. HE WAS BEING WHEELED INTO THE NEXT ROOM...



AND NOW, FOR YOU...
NOW TO DRAIN
YOUR BLOOD!

SALLY! SALLY...
BABY!

SALLY LAY ON A TABLE... WHITE... COLD. THE PUNCTURE MARKS ON HER THROAT INDICATED HER STATE...



SHE'S... DEAD!

YES. AND I'LL KEEP
HER TOO. SHE'S VERY
SWEET!

THE HORRIBLE FIEND MOVED ACROSS THE ROOM, A SWITCH CLICKED, THE THROBING SOUND STARTED...



YOU'LL... YOU'LL
KEEP HER?
I DON'T
UNDER-
STAND!

SOME PEOPLE
ARE SWEET
PEOPLE... SOME
ARE BITTER.
I ONLY LIKE
THE SWEET!

THE BITTERNESS THAT PEOPLE CARRY THROUGH LIFE IS OFTEN REFLECTED IN THEIR PHYSICAL MAKE-UP. HIGH-SCHOOL PRINCIPALS... LIBRARIANS... BUS DRIVERS... THEY'RE ALL BITTER... ACID. I TURN THOSE BACK!



THE BODIES
THEY FOUND...

HE CAME TOWARDS PHILIP WITH TWO NEEDLE-LIKE TUBES WITH RUBBER NOSES ATTACHED...



I ONLY KEEP THE SWEET ONES!
AND I CAN'T TELL UNTIL I
DRAW THEIR BLOOD! NOW,
THIS WON'T HURT. IT WILL
BE JUST LIKE FALLING ASLEEP...

THE THING BENT OVER PHILIP, PLUMBING THE TWO NEEDLES INTO HIS THROAT...



IT'S A PUMP AFFAIR!
AIR GOES IN ONE TUBE...
BLOOD COMES OUT THE OTHER...

DON'T YOU...
DON'T YOU
DRINK
BLOOD?
AREN'T...

PHILIP FELT HIMSELF FADING. HE COULD HARDLY ASK THE QUESTION... HARDLY HEAR THE ANSWER...



...AREN'T YOU
A... VAMPIRE?

VAMPIRE? ME? HADES,
NO! I CAN'T STAND BLOOD!
I LIKE NICE SWEET THINGS!
I'M A GHOUL!

**HEE-HEE! I'M GOING TO DO
LIKE THESE TWO GOOFY
GHOULUNATICS, AND GET MY
OWN SUBSCRIPTIONS TO ALL
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GLAD VAULT #3



GLAD VAULT #4



GLAD VAULT #5



GLAD VAULT #6



GLAD WEIRD #1



GLAD WEIRD #2



GLAD WEIRD #3



GLAD WEIRD #4



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